

HARKINS vs. FISKE.

It has been known in theatrical circles for the past two weeks that the business relations of Fiske and Harkins had been the reverse of friendly. Each was endeavoring to oust the other from his place in the management. Events culminated on Tuesday last, when Mr. Harkins took what we regard as a wholly unfair and utterly unprofessional advantage over Mr. Fiske, by making application for the appointment of a receiver. We say unfair and unprofessional because at the time Fiske was lying prostrate with illness and was therefore incapacitated from replying to the allegations of Harkins. Harkins, moreover, showed very bad taste in engaging as his counsel the attorney for a rival theatre. The facts of the matter are that the connection of Harkins with the management has proved detrimental to the interests of the Fifth Avenue and that Fiske has been striving to get Harkins out. It is a well-known fact that whatever business has been done at the Fifth Avenue has been due to Fiske. It was he who "worked up" whatever success the theatre has attained. Last season he made success of *Modjeska*. This year her engagement proved unsuccessful. It can be flattering to the feelings of Harkins, but the fact remains that his presence in the bill has had the tendency of keeping people from the house. On the engagement of Mary Anderson—when Mr. Harkins, by reason of a severe domestic bereavement, took no active part in the management—the firm cleared \$4,250. *Modjeska's* business in "Camille" was quite fair, but in "Frou-Frou," when Harkins appeared, it declined perceptibly. During Booth's engagement, "Hamlet," "Richelieu" and the "Fool's Revenge," in none of which Mr. Harkins appeared, did well, but "King Lear" and "Othello," in both of which Harkins appeared, did badly. Jefferson's engagement, which Harkins has been managing, has been a failure thus far. It may be seen from this that Harkins has lost that popularity which Fiske counted on when he admitted him as partner. Moreover, the engagements effected by Harkins tended to embarrass the management. The stock company he gathered together, while one of the most expensive in the country, is notoriously one of the most inefficient. In the first place Harkins got together a company without a leading lady. This of itself would prove fatal to almost any theatre. It compelled Fiske to hire extra people continually, as Nellie Cummings, Constance Hamblin, etc. Frank Mordaunt's engagement, too, proved ill-advised, for he played exactly the same parts Harkins should have played and has in consequence been idle more than half the time. There was no subletty in the organization and was deficient in other respects. Fiske has not that sense of paying terms to stars the theatre has been compelled to stagger under the weight of a heavy and unproductive stock salary list. Judge Van Vorst on Tuesday declined to grant the motion of Harkins and further argument is set down for this morning. The result of the matter will be that Fiske will become again sole manager of the Fifth Avenue Theatre, Harkins retiring. Under the circumstances this was bound, sooner or later, to happen, and Harkins' action will serve to expedite it.

Final Break-up of the French Opera Troupe.

Mlle. Zelia Weil, and M. M. Milet and Doria, of the French Opera Troupe, sailed for Europe by the steamer France last Wednesday, all efforts to reorganize the troupe having failed utterly. The company—quite a fair one of its kind—appeared here first at Booth's Theatre, where bad management and Starr Morrissey killed whatever hopes there might have been of doing any good business. The season failing, the troupe came near breaking up. Several abortive attempts were then made to find for the troupe a suitable theatre, and spasmodic attempts at performances were made at Fifth Avenue Hall and at the Union League Theatre. Finally, Henri Wertheimer and M. Durand got together the best elements of the organization, and began a season at the St. James Theatre. The selection of the house proved unfortunate, as the theatre was then under the management of Josh Hart, who has proved of late years a veritable Jonah in all theatrical enterprises in which he has been engaged. The season there proved, of course, unsuccessful. At its conclusion the company disbanded, individual members making such arrangements as they could until it was reorganized. About ten days ago Brown and Barnes effected an arrangement with Manager Crossy, of the Broad Street Theatre, Philadelphia, whereby he agreed to pay a certainty of \$3,300 for two weeks' engagement. Matters continued pleasant until last week, when announcement was made to Brown and Barnes that the company did not have money sufficient to leave New York and pay their railroad fare to Philadelphia. At this juncture the troupe cannot come on without an advance of \$150. Shall we supply it?

His message answer came from Crossy: "Advance it." The money was accordingly advanced. On Monday, however, it was found that the \$150 would not be made good, and that the company would have to leave New York before the company could be reorganized. Brown thereupon telegraphed to Philadelphia to see Crossy, who was quite ready to see them on the terms of his contract,

declined—on the ground of inability—to make further advances. A manager here learning the facts, and perceiving that an advance of perhaps \$200 would secure him the advantages of the \$3,300 contract, endeavored to carry out its provisions in some shape. The arrangement fell through, however, and the troupe, finding it impossible to leave New York, could not get to Philadelphia, and, accordingly, the North Broad was closed. Efforts were then made to have them come on in time to open Tuesday or Wednesday matinee, Christmas, at the latest. This proved impossible, and Brown returned here, all efforts to get them from here to Philadelphia having failed. The result of the matter is that there is a legal complication between Crossy and Brown and Barnes for the \$150 advanced by the latter. Crossy says they must look to the managers of the company for their redress, but Brown and Barnes say that the money was advanced on Crossy's order and for his account, and that he must pay it. The whole affair is unfortunate, as showing how far bad management can ruin the best theatrical enterprise. The three members of the company who returned to Europe did wisely, but the condition of the others who remain must evoke real sympathy, as they are in a destitute condition, and have no present prospect of engagement. A benefit will probably be given them to enable them to get back to Europe.

Revival of the Black Crook.

The "Black Crook" is to be revived at Niblo's next month, on a style of splendor commensurate with that of its original production at this theatre, which occurred in September, 1866. The famous spectacle will be given under the direction of the Kiralfy Brothers, with all its original effects and with many new attractions. There will be three premiere dancers, a corps of one hundred coryphees, and probably some of the original cast. It is expected to run the "Crook" through the Spring and Summer, and if Manager Starin pursues his present idea of getting up the spectacle in really good style, we have little doubt but that he can achieve an old-fashioned one hundred nights run. The play has not been done here since Ransom Rogers gave it at the Grand Opera House, but it was then so badly done that there were few chances of success. There are a good many old time associations connected with the "Crook" at Niblo's, which would inspire with great interest the revival of the piece at its old home. Very many persons who are only casual theatre-goers nowadays, have a very vivid recollection of the original glories of the "Crook" at this house. It calls up a good many pleasant reflections, and will be quite a novelty just now. The Kiralfys have a reputation as the players through Canada, and some cities of New York State. It has attracted large business—the old name seeming to have lost very little of its magnetism. The era of spectacle, which seemed a logical outcome of the ways, wealth, and prodigality which succeeded the late war, ended abruptly with the financial crash of 1873. Since then the drift of popular favor has run counter to spectacles, and none of them have achieved any real success in this city. There seems to be some revival of interest in that direction just now, and the "Crook" would be apt to do very well. How far it will be possible to replace the original cast is not difficult to say. The company is scattered, most of its members being in England. C. H. Morton, who played Herzog in each of the successive revivals under Jarrett and Palmer at Niblo's, is now with these managers in Europe, in one of their Uncle Tom's Cabin parties, now devastating the capitals of that region. Frank Tannehill will probably play the role here. It has often been a question with most people how a play of such shallow pretensions to literary merit could achieve such wonderful popularity. There are dozens of better spectacles, but none of them have ever quite come up to the degree of success achieved by the "Crook." We don't suppose a better evidence of the real hold it has on the public can be cited than the fact that the announcement of its revival at the theatre where it has been played already for more than twelve hundred times, has evoked as much interest as would the production of a new play.

A Broken "Hart"—The "Pittsburgh Grip."

Several members of the defunct Hart "Chicago" party arrived in town on Monday. The account they give of the break-up, shows it to have been one of a most disgraceful kind. It appears that the manager was in arrears of salary six weeks, and that the company were compelled to pay their own railroad fares to get home. The break-up occurred at Pittsburgh, where Hart's troupe had been playing a disastrous engagement. The chief members of the company got home as best they could, but some of the poorer ones were left stranded in Pittsburgh, there to forage on their friends and the public for the very necessities of life. Business was bad from the first, Hart's name seeming to exercise the most baneful influence everywhere. There was a time when the identification of Josh Hart with a variety entertainment would have been sufficient to assure its success. Taken together, it is probably one of the very worst of the many disgraceful theatrical collapses which have marked the present season of disasters. The shameless iniquity of firing a company without paying them or even contributing to their traveling expenses should

not be allowed to pass unnoticed. And when we consider that the ostensible manager was a virtual fugitive in another section of the country, the wrong becomes the greater and the more flagrant.

But there is another matter in connection with this man Hart which should not go by easily. The charge is a very severe one, but seems to be borne out by the circumstances.

It is alleged—on authority in no way prejudicial or hostile to Hart—that prior to leaving for California with his company, he took proceedings in bankruptcy, and was actually at the time he made the engagements with his company legally unbound to pay them. For a man devoid of name, means, and credit, to speculate on the incredulity, and trade on the importunities, of actors and actresses, is not, unfortunately, a thing rare in theatricals. But in these cases the company knows what chances it takes, and goes out on a "snap" with full knowledge of the facts. But for a manager to deliberately hire an extensive company, to contract to pay them salaries, and to transport them from their homes and places of residence three thousand miles on a mere contingency, is a fraud and outrage which, if true, should consign the perpetrator to the lowest place in the regard of fair, square, and decent men and women. The snapping of an axle, the misplacement of a switch, or a single igniting spark from an engine, might destroy the whole prospects of the troupe, and consign its trusting members to the same bad fate as overtook Mr. Hart's other enterprise in Pittsburgh last week. Fate deals roughly enough in all conscience with most actors and actresses, but it seems to have been reserved for Hart to go furthest in the iniquity. It is time now to put a stop to this trafficking on the cares of the "poor players" who not only bear the burden, but shoulder often, too, the chances of management as well.

This is a thing that must be stopped, and we can conceive of no better time than the present to stop it.

The downfall of Hart in the past few years has been a most swift and remarkable one. Five years ago the name Josh Hart on a bill would be accepted as a full guarantee of the quality of the entertainment. He was regarded, and not without reason, as the shrewdest variety manager in America. Now there is none so poor as to do him reverence. His losses have been colossal, and they have not been, it is only fair to say, due wholly to his own demerit. Quite the reverse, Hart was a smart and a successful manager till the day he turned his hand against the profession which had gained him his wealth and status, and the day he drew his first check on the proceeds of which a horde of hungry adventurers were made able to be merry at his expense he began his decline, which has ended this week in a disastrous break-up in one place, and, if reports are to be believed, a bad failure in another.

The decline of Hart is to us, and must be to most people, a source of regret. The decadence of a noted name may give to some selfish minds a temporary feeling of triumph, but it affords to us a feeling of very sincere commiseration and regret.

Poor Hart! His every enterprise has been blighted. The Central Park Garden stands idle and cheerless. The Standard Theatre, the great monument of his thrift and triumph, has passed into other and better hands, and Mr. Henderson is reaping the harvest Hart worked so assiduously to sow. The St. James Theatre kept open, and had prospects till Hart took it; but this connection killed it, and an advertisement in one of the papers last week announced that the place is to be torn down. The Comique, where Hart made his first success, is now in the full flush of Harrigan and Hart's success, the two men whom Hart's organ so virulently assailed when they sought to build up for themselves a name as actors and managers. In the broad surface of affairs there remains no trace of Josh Hart.

He may now have time to inquire to what end all his "backing" was. He may ask whether the hundreds of dollars he sunk have ever turned into his pocket one cent of return or he may ask himself whether he has ever derived a dollar of income from his unfortunate investment, or a day's gratification in having contributed the means whereby the best and truest, the most eager, active, cultured or industrious of his own profession were so ruthlessly and wantonly assailed.

New Year's Day brought to Josh Hart no bright recollections, no brilliant future prospects; but it brought him face to face with facts and fate, and showed him a wealth of opportunities disregarded, and work of a lifetime dissipated and irretrievably thrown away. Even the organ he established has found a new "backer," and New York holds no better memory of Hart than that of a man who had once been very successful, but who by his own act suffered a speedy decline.

Tony Pastor—We present in the MIRROR this week, a picture of Tony Pastor, the most popular man on the American stage. Mr. Pastor is known no less as manager than as a performer. The wonderful tenacity of his hold on the interest and attention of New York patrons, is perhaps due more to his genial personal qualities than to any other cause.

Chas. Wyndham has determined to produce "Lemures" and also "Our Boarding House." Grove's amusing comedy has been played nearly everywhere. London is about the last place one would look for it.

Mr. Scott's Cheek.

Mr. Clement Scott, of London, is clearly entitled to whatever credit accrues to the exercise of the most colossal assurance. Mr. Scott belongs to that large and unfortunately increasing class of quasi-journalists in London who are forever seeking to combine the business of criticism with the art of writing plays, without obtaining much success in either field. Their chief aim seems to be to bring their diligence into equal requisition at the editor's desk and in the greenroom, and to acquire whatever profit there may be in both, without hazarding anything in either. People on this side of the Atlantic know of Scott by the announcement which appears from time to time in English papers and is occasionally wafted over here, that "Mr. Scott is engaged on a new play which is shortly to be produced at the Theatre."

It is a feature of Mr. Scott's vocation that in what he is pleased to call his efforts at dramatic authorship "he has associated with him some collaborator drawn generally from the same haunts and contributing to the partnership the self same qualities which Scott possesses in such bountiful measure—sublime assurance and restless activity in appropriating other people's literary work. It invariably turns out that when the "new" play of Mr. Scott and his friend is produced it is no more than a direct translation from the work of some French dramatist to which Scott has with charming modesty affixed his own name and that of his collaborator. The fact that the bulk of London journalists of the stamp of Scott do whenever occasion offers somewhat the same thing in modified form, tends to create a sort of mutual admiration society, in which every man praises the others' works as superior to everything but his own, and pledge him immunity from that condemnation which should be vented at all times on thieves and pirates, whatever may be the influence or wherever the chosen field of robbery. In a coterie of this kind, composed almost wholly as it is of idle pretenders and shallow imitators, there must be much rivalry on the score of assurance. But surely Scott, by his action last week, is entitled the pre-eminence among them all. Last Saturday, the 300th night of Victorien Sardou's "Diplomacy" occurred at the Prince of Wales' Theatre, and when the actors assembled on the stage they discovered, according to Scott, that they had been "the subject of a graceful compliment." It took the form of hot-house flowers and "well-filled cigar-cases," which were presented to the performers "with the earnest good wishes and thanks of Mr. Clement Scott." We are not informed whether the cigar cases were given to the ladies, and the hot-house flowers to the gentlemen, or vice-versa. Nothing is said of the form which the tribute of Mr. Scott's good wishes and thanks took toward Mr. Sardou, the author of the play. There is seemingly no mention of him in the matter. He got no cigar case. Not even a stray hot-house flower. But he must have consoled himself with the thought that he received a high compliment for his work in not receiving any tribute of Scott's good will—the compliment or recognition it was within Scott's power to afford. The clever Frenchman must have smiled to hear of the Englishman's scant delicacy and super-abundant assurance. If we mistake not, some one of the forthcoming French reviews will contain M. Sardou's caustic reference to the Englishman's "freshness," coupled with the remark that a hot-house is a good place for a man who fishes another's writings, and trades in cigar cases on the product of his fame and name.

PROFESSIONAL DOINGS.

Mr. Henry Irving, the actor, and Mr. Frank Marshall have come to the conclusion that "Hamlet" is Elizabethan and not Danish.

The next play at the Globe will be "Serpent and Dove," after which the Fry Sisters appear, probably in "Mischief," which pleased greatly on the road.

Matters are not entirely serene in the company of the California Theatre, where they are favored with two "leading ladies" and two managers, who are actors as well.

Frank Mayo has been engaged at Niblo's Garden for two weeks, beginning this week on a certainty of \$1500 per week.

B. T. Ringgold now gives an imitation of Charles Fechter, in "Almost a Life," at the Standard. As an imitation it is not a success.

Mrs. Lander has retired to Washington, where she proposes residing permanently.

The snow blockade in the West has interfered materially with the business in some places.

Rose Lisle and Edward Arnott play a return engagement at the Bowery Theatre in February.

Jarrett and Palmer threaten New York with a revival of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" at Booth's Theatre in March.

Five thousand dollars is stated to be the amount lost in the "Double Marriage" at the Lyceum.

John E. Owens begins an engagement at the Park Theatre, January 20th, in "Dot," succeeding the Colville troupe.

Herman Linde begins his series of Shakespearean recitations at Steinway Hall, on the 8th inst.

W. J. Stephens, who has been quite successful playing variety theaters with his trained dogs "Zp" and "Romeo," is trying

to have a play written which will show them off to better advantage than does "Saved from the Storm," in which they are now appearing.

Ada Cavendish has been engaged to appear at the Park Theatre this Spring.

The Lingards go to the Broadway, appearing in a round of their best characters.

Mr. J. H. Rowa, who played in "Queen's Evidence" at the Bowery by permission of A. M. Palmer, will not, it is announced, be permitted to play it in other cities. The report that John McCullough, before playing "Coriolanus" in Philadelphia, telegraphed to Palmer to get his permission to play it is untrue.

Manager Abbey intends mounting "Dot" at the Park in most admirable style. Ten chorus singers have been engaged to represent the "Midsummer Night's Dream."

Warde and Barrymore play in Montreal the present week.

Georgie Drew is resting for a week at home.

Barney Macauley has been offered for a California season \$20,000 for ten weeks for himself and company, commencing at Omaha, June 9th, playing two weeks on the road out.

Frank Mayo proposes a trip to Australia after his engagement at Niblo's. He is offered large terms, with a guarantee of \$5,000 per month for five months.

S. M. Hickey has shortened the length of his engagement with Genevieve Ward. She has proved a dead failure as a star on the road.

The Hess Opera Troupe make a flying visit to New Orleans, opening there January 20th.

William Henderson's "Standard Theatre" Company, including Maude Granger, Kate Osborne, Gus. Levick, Eben Plimpton, etc., go out with "Almost a Life," January 10th. They will take one week in New England and York State, thence to Cleveland, Chicago, St. Louis, Cincinnati, etc.

Mrs. Oates remains altogether seventeen weeks in California, having made the greatest hit in the "Little Duke" ever known there. She has played it eight weeks to an average of over \$5,000 per week. It will be produced with her present company at a New York theatre early in April.

A. M. Palmer lost over \$800 by his Brooklyn venture, at the Academy of Music, with "Kiralfy" last week.

A Law for the Lawless.

Respectable business men, in all trades, have a right to protect themselves against unfair and unprofessional competition. Indeed, most honest men consider it a responsibility devolving upon them to keep irregular operators out of reputable lines of business. This is a rule by which the downtown merchant is guided, and it ought to be equally binding on the Broadway theatrical manager. It should be not only the privilege, but the duty of well established, square-dealing theatres, to take aggressive measures to crowd out the irresponsible, vagrant speculators who serve only to bring the profession into disrepute, both socially and in a commercial sense.

What would become of the wholesale dry goods trade, if honest dealers permitted Chatham street auctioneers to take charge of their goods and swindle their customers right and left? What will become of a theatrical system that enables a man without a dollar in his pocket to open a house, engage a company, and, if his speculation fails, walk off and leave hundreds of dollars of debts behind him? Sooner or later, the honest manager will find that the public, which the dishonest speculator cheated, can only reimburse itself by staying away from his show.

Of course, it is a good thing for the theatrical business to encourage all legitimate and practical enterprises. But there is no need of confusing these with vagabond ventures which have neither a reason for existing nor a chance to exist. Business is business; and knavery is knavery. A man who, knowing he cannot pay his employees the salaries he promises them, makes them his unconscious and unwilling partners in any wild scheme he may take it into his head to carry out, is nothing more nor less than a knave. It does not make any difference that he may undertake this responsibility with really honest intentions, and a sincere belief that he is going to make money. He is simply trading on the credulity or necessities of those whom he hires, and if they lose their stake with him, he is not an unfortunate investor, but an unlucky swindler.

When people of this sort choose the theatre business for their field of operations, the harm they do is not confined to those with whom they deal directly and immediately. The man without a cent in his pocket, who opens a theatre for one week, to try some wild-cat speculation, and bursts up after three days, leaves his company, his stagehands and his ushers in the lurch. But that is not all. He manages to make himself mischievous in other ways; and it is the cold and respectable manager who must pay for this mischief. The printers and various tradesmen whom the snap-speculator has cheated will henceforth demand higher rates and cash payments of the profession in general, and the swindled public will distrust the promises and announcements of

HOURS WITH FORREST.

Some Reminiscences of the Great Actor and His Conversations About the Drama.

It was a bleak, blustering November day when a thin sprinkling of snow laid upon the wind swept streets and a few leaves fled before the angry blast, that I paid my last visit to Edwin Forrest. He was then domiciled at his house on Broad street, Philadelphia. He had left the stage, on which for so many years he had been the idol in this country and the wonder in England. He had ended his career as a reader, and was living in elegant retirement amid his friends, his books, his pictures and those recollections of the past earned by a stout struggle with a not over friendly world. His mansion stood on that November day cold, massive and silent. The dull gray of the atmosphere made the outside less than inviting, while the eager, biting air and the sullen aspect of surrounding nature added to the gloom of the picture. A rap of the knocker woke the echoes of the silent hall, which, in its expanse, brought to mind those of the old castles inhabited by the knights of other days—those men who took power by the mailed hand and held it in the same manner. The noise of bolts and bars told that attendants were on the alert, and then the door was opened and I was admitted to the inside of the house. From the hall a broad staircase led to the upper of the building. Even in this portion of the dwelling the taste of the occupant was plainly visible. There were pictures, busts and statues in proper positions, and the lightest distributed as to give them proper prominence.

I was met with a rush of light from an open door, and a welcome, hearty, manly and embracing, from the master of the house. The room, into which Mr. Forrest led the way, was the library. It was a long, narrow apartment. It had its front on Broad street, and the rear windows looked out upon a garden which, in summer, was redolent with the perfume of a thousand roses, and vocal with the matin songs of a score of birds. Book-cases were filled with rare and costly volumes. Shakespeare was there, in all varieties of binding and from all times. Old and choice editions of this author were lying in all parts of the room. His collections of works in other departments of intellectual effort was full and complete.

Mr. Forrest was a most charming talker. He did not totally discard the arts of the actor. He used these appliances to strengthen, enliven and make more forcible the topics upon which he discoursed. But, at the same time, he hid the actor behind the talker. He did not make apparent the actor and the footlights. He was a keen and exhaustive critic from all points of his art; but combined with this was an element of honesty as full and ample as his own big, manly nature. He would praise and commend; but united and interwoven with this laud was that of commending and praising, which was never overlooked or omitted. He knew his own strength, and that he was not jealous of others in the same line of intellectual effort.

"Mr. Forrest, you have, during your long stage-life, seen and acted with all the prominent men of your profession. Which, in your estimation, stood the highest in all the elements of the dramatic art?"

"Edmund Kean was, in my estimation, the greatest actor that ever trod the stage. And perhaps it would not be venturing too far to say that his equal will never again be seen upon the boards. At his best his acting was an inspiration. He walked and talked as Sir Giles Overreach, Othello, and the other characters he represented, and I was as much entranced and amazed as one of the actors. His acting was always a wonder to me. I could admire, but could not fathom it. Though his processes were based on the strictest art rules, still his feelings were so intense and his actions so permeated with fire, devotion and individual force that the effect produced seemed to be over, above and independent of all art. The last act of 'A New Way to Pay Old Debts' in the hands of Mr. Kean was terrible in intensity, and more than one lady refused to play with him in this piece. They would not subject their nervous systems to such a terrible strain. The dying scene, as pictured by Mr. Kean, was a masterpiece of all sensation and melodrama effects, and the horrid realization was complete. It was this simplicity of truth, nature and strength that placed Mr. Kean on the topmost round of his art, and will keep him there against all competition. And yet he was by no means an equal actor. He could not pull the cords and make the mechanical puppet jump and caper on the stage. The constantly equal actor is the mechanical actor. Nature is not always up to her best efforts; neither can man reach his best level at all times. But, when Mr. Kean felt the prickings and loadings of his genius, he was, like Saul among his brethren, a head and shoulders above them all, and when he left the stage his mantle fell upon no expectant artist."

"What was the school of Mr. Macready, and what place did he occupy in that school?"

"I were queries to Mr. Forrest at the same interview."

Mr. Forrest and Mr. Macready had not been friends in the latter part of their careers. But Mr. Forrest was far too broad and catholic in his love and devotion to art to suffer his private likes or dislikes to stand in the way of his judgment in relation to the reputation of a brother artist. He displayed no hostile feelings toward Mr. Macready, but spoke of him, as he did of Mr. Kean, with perfect fairness and candor.

"It is well known," replied Mr. Forrest, "that I am not an admirer of school of acting which had Mr. Macready as its leading supporter. I lean towards the Kembles school. I admire constant, broad effect, rather than spasmodic action. Nature, when acting at her best, acts in a constant manner. Her spasmodic movements may be for a time brilliant, but they are necessarily fragmentary and are not complete. When the penetrating John Brougham called the Kembles school the 'foggy intellectual' was not so far astray. But it was not of this school Mr. Macready was. He had no rival, and none who saw his Hamlet alone, and none who saw his Hamlet over will ever forget the wonder which infused into portions of these choruses the nervous action of Mr. Macready, at times fully in sympathy with the action he assumed, and words, looks and action, produced a perfect effect, school being narrow and trifling, and general, the actor soon fell

into the former track and lost his hold upon the true meaning of art—that of presenting nature in its broadest and most complete form. Under the teachings and discipline of a better school of dramatic art, Mr. Macready would have been a more catholic exponent of the works of the great masters. As it was, his knowledge of technicalities of his art was more extended than that of any of his contemporaries, and his stage business a study which no one could neglect to study without a heavy loss in the line of their profession. He was a good actor in a bad school.

"Is not Mr. Davenport heartily and honestly on the Kembles platform of art?"

"Yes," said Mr. Forrest, with quick emphasis and hearty earnestness, "and the result is seen in his glorious acting in parts which make him forget such melodramatic monstrosities as he has been forced into by the thumb screws of stock life. If Mr. Davenport had, at an early day in his career, abandoned all but legitimate characters, he would have been a still more perfect actor. His natural school was also injured by his long association with Mr. Macready in England. That fault had to be overcome and corrected when he returned to the United States before he could again get into that track, at the end of which lay the goal of his true ambition. But he has returned to the true school, and his 'Sir Giles Overreach' and 'Hamlet' are fine specimens of legitimate and educated art. These two roles show his art. He is no pretender. He does clean work with clean hands, and will occupy a high place among the list of American artists—upon whose shoulders rests at this time the superstructure of legitimate home art."

"Edwin Booth comes from a parentage that places more than a usual amount of responsibility upon him in relation to the present and future of dramatic art; does he tread in the footsteps of his gifted and erratic father?"

"Edwin Booth is undoubtedly a cultured, studious and careful actor," answered Mr. Forrest, "but you have placed the contrast at a very high pitch. His father was a wonder in some respects. He was a genius, and bits of his acting have never been excelled in pathos and volcanic fierceness of aroused feeling. His Richard III. and Iago were full of genius, and in other parts he was also abreast of the giants of the stage. There was a magnetism in the presence and acting of the elder Booth which attracted and held the closest attention of all classes in an audience. He was a highly cultivated man. But that fact was not so plainly seen in his acting as was his changed personality of the man. When he put on the hump of Richard he also took up his whole personality, and he was Iago in all particulars. These were the results of genius. Edwin Booth is also cultured, also studious, also wedded to his profession. He is a well equipped actor. He has studied lovingly and carefully his father's methods. He is a careful actor. He never slights a personation. These are matters to be commended in an artist. He has a fine presence, and, for a certain line of characters, his voice is unsurpassed. His Hamlet is full of excellencies, and his Shylock is a fine presentation of this fine creation of Shakespeare. But he has not the genius of his father. Few have. He is, however, comparatively young, and no man ceases learning on the stage if his mind is bent in that direction. And Edwin Booth is still a student of nature and his great art. What he has already done justifies high hopes for what he will do in the future."

After some masterly recitations, which Mr. Forrest was fond of giving when in proper company, I took my leave of the old actor, scholar and student. It was now night, and Mr. Forrest, with a half in his gait and a profusion of kindly words on his lips, accompanied me to the head of the great stairway, and from thence I made my way to the street. The last look I had of Mr. Forrest was as he turned and entered his library door, to again forget the world, its sunshine and its shade, amid his books, his pictures and his studies. I never saw him in life again. But I stood beside his open coffin in a few months, and with thousands of others, forgot the flaws in the mirror when remembering the brilliant gleams it had shed upon the history of dramatic art throughout the world.

FECHTER'S FREAKS.

ASTONISHING THE PENNSYLVANIA DUTCH—FARMING WITHOUT FENCES—OTHER ODDITIES AND ECCENTRICITIES.

The road that leads from Quakertown station in Bucks county, Pa., to the farm of Charles Fechter, the once popular and still famous actor, is a beautiful to the eye but extensive to the pocket. It is only three miles and a half from village to farm, but there are four intervening toll-gates and three cents is the charge at each gate, and the turnpike people—there two companies concerned—reap a rich harvest in nickels and pennies. Whether Mr. Fechter, who has set about to reform many abuses that exist in the northern part of Bucks county, ever turned his attention to effect a reduction in the cost of turnpike travel is not a matter recorded in Quakertown history, but the statements of residents hereabouts are that the actor has tried hard to change many a time honored observance in this vicinity and has met with but small success. It is just three years since the actor blended the profession of acting with the business of farming. His experience in the agricultural line has not been marked with the brilliant success which for a quarter of a century before attended his career on the stage. Mr. Fechter, as an actor, is widely known, but during the last three years he has dropped out of sight, as it were, and is remembered for what he was much more indeed than what is.

In the fall of 1870 Mr. Fechter came to America, endorsed by press and public, so the bills say, and more than that, bearing the warm recommendation as a great actor to the American theatre-going public of his warm personal friends, Wilkie Collins, Charles Dickens, and Edmund Yates, at that time just out of his post office clerkship and budding into authorship. With such introductions as these his opening in New York was auspicious, but the critics, more astonished than they could tell, scarcely knew how to treat the blonde wig in which the stranger presented his Hamlet on the first night. It was the wig that took up space in the papers and left the analysis of the great actor's matchless art an almost unconsidered theme.

But as Fechter's Hamlet became more familiar his wig grew in favor, as his acting did, and it was not long until he was awarded all the praise and admiration his acting demanded. Never did foreign artist put foot on American soil under such favorable auspices. The assertion is broad, for many an actor and singer has swung out for fame and ducats on this land, but few of them scored so complete a success. Society opened its gates unsolicited, and when society smiles the actor may not only bask in sunshine, but reap the harvest of wealth. "Leastways," said Barry Sullivan once, when speaking of his rather cold reception in America, "leastways that be my thought, and I speak out of experience, I do."

IN THE LIGHT OF COMPARISON.

Booth but a few seasons before had had an unprecipitated run in New York in Hamlet. It was at the old Winter Garden, and old man Stuart, who has pushed many a struggling actor into the current of prosperity, and been set out of the stream himself by obstinate eddies, had been his manager. Meeting the old gentleman not long ago, I asked him if he had seen Fechter's debut in America. "No; but I went down to Boston to see him when he managed the Globe, and I found not only an artist but an idol. Boston, nor New York for that matter, never knew so popular a man in this profession, that is, so long as he kept straight."

Booth's long run developed keen critics of Shakespearean plays, particularly of "Hamlet," and so Fechter appeared with the weight of comparison clogging a fair judgment of his ability. But much success had made him bold, and to a degree, careless. Reporters vainly tried to interview him. He was exclusive and imperious. Adverse criticism made him angry, and he vowed that "Nevaire; no nevaire, would he remain in so beastly a country," or that "I shall call to the account personal the fool that speaks so of me in the papir." Fechter traveled to the principal cities in the Union, playing Hamlet, Ruy Blas, and in "The Duke's Motto," "Corsican Brothers," "No Thoroughfare," and "Monte Christo," all with great success. Perhaps his great successes were made in Boston and San Francisco, although on his return to the latter place three years ago, he was received with apathy, and the engagement was not remunerative. In 1871 the actor leased the Globe Theatre in Boston and assumed its management. His rule there was marked with quarrels and strife, and was not successful. He bought the Lyceum Theatre on Fourteenth street, in New York, managed it and himself into bankruptcy, then on to the road again he went.

A little more than three years ago Charles Leclerc, then Fechter's agent, dropped into this quiet vicinity to look at a farm advertised for sale. He went away, and Mr. Fechter shortly appeared here and took up quarters at the Bush House until the house on the fifty-seven acre farm, for which the actor had paid \$6,000, was prepared for occupancy. Fechter then began his farming. The fields of his new farm were divided by a neat snake fence, "take and rider" they call it here, and a similar barrier was at the limit of his new domain.

"Ah," said Fechter, "people are slow and stupid. In England and France a gentleman farms. Take away those fences."

"What, the line fence, too?"

"Yes, sirrah; and now."

But the man equally concerned with the new owner in the line fence on one side and another side said no—very sternly no, although they were willing Fechter should put a board fence in the stead of the old one. Down came the partition fences, however, and orchard and garden, wheatfield and cornfield, meadow and grazing paddock became as one big field. With stock to pasture and grain to grow within the great inclosure, the farmer may see that, although fields might blend the treatment bestowed by cattle upon a growing patch of corn, although pleasant for the knee was not kind to the corn. It so proved at least, and while the cattle thrived the grain crop prospered not, and for two years Fechter's cattle have been tethered to a post.

A CHANGE FROM FAME.

The dark shadows of Fechter's life stand out all the stronger because of the brightness into which they are projected, but now there is much shadow and little light, for the actor has fallen from his high station by reason of ill health, brought about by excesses, and the graceful actor has made way for a graceless old age—an old age that has come before its due, for it is only thirty years since the young French sculptor, then twenty-eight years of age, made his first bow as actor at the Salle Moliere, in his native land. From that time his career has always been upward and onward to great successes. So far as drinking is concerned it never interfered with his business until a few years ago, and his engagements were carried out faithfully, although managers had come to know by the higher range of his always imperious temper, and on occasions his absence of mind, that he was failing somewhat. One that knew him well relates that Fechter was remarkable for pauses. Reaching a dramatic climax, it was his custom to stop short in action and speech and stand perfectly still. In many cases this was provocative of great applause. His acting became noticeable for the growing frequency and length of these pauses, until finally it became the business of the prompter to always watch and correct him. In the winter of 1875 he broke in on a number of engagements by falling sick before they were completed. In 1876 this was still more the case, until it was with difficulty that he could obtain an engagement in any first-class theatre.

Indisposition was the plea, until finally, in Rochester, his troubles culminated by his appearing so drunk upon the stage that the audience hissed and left the theatre, and the whole story of continued drinking and high living was told in the public prints.

During the past two seasons Mr. Fechter has broken down very frequently, and the manager of a leading stage theatre, in speaking of him recently, said: "Fechter, who should have been the leading actor of the world, is dead to the profession of which he was at one time the ornament."

In Bucks county the quiet, order-loving, occasionally beer-drinking people paid much attention to Fechter, and the proverbial county gossip sought not to extenuate the stories of his consumption of liquor that rivalled the performances of the fat rogue companion of Prince Hal and Pious. Mr. Fechter will in all probability play but a little more. He proposes to go to England again, to build a theatre in New York, to found a school of dramatic art on a grand scale, to star occasionally as he has done before, but his best friends know that of all these plans perhaps none will ever reach fruition, certainly that none will ever attain success.

In an engagement in San Francisco a few years ago Mr. Fechter was on the stage in a front scene and the carpenters were at work

putting up a castle on the back part of the stage. They made some noise, and the actor stopped and addressed the audience: "When those fools are through with their work I go on with mine." The carpenters did not stop at once, and Fechter walked off and declined to appear again that night, and did not.

Rose Etyng returned to town on Saturday, after a week's tour. The company had been engaged for six.

Word comes from Paris that Sardou's new play "Les Noces de Fernande," produced at the Opera Comique last week, is a qualified failure.

It is proposed by Dion Bourcicault to revive "Daddy O'Dowd" during his present engagement at the Grand Opera House.

Fred Stinson was in town this week in search of attractions. He has engaged Pauline Markham, Jennie Yeamans, Kate Fisher, Sarah Nelson, Chas. Sturges, Carrie Lewis, Quilter and Goodrich, the Martinetti family, Mlle. Roser, Ben. Dodge, Howard and Thompson, Eva Byron, Crossly and Elder, and Harry Gwynette to appear at the Howard Athenaeum. "Mike Martin" will be produced on the 6th and "Chilperic" on the 13th.

Thos. Whiffin plays in "H. M. S. Pinafore" at the Standard.

Dollie Bidwell succeeds the Foy Sisters at the Globe Theatre. They play there next Monday.

There was no performance at Minnie Cummings' Theatre on Monday evening, and the house has been since closed. On Saturday a branch of the defunct opera company, including Mlle. Rosine Stani, Mlle. Be the Edant, Mlle. Cecile Lecomte, Mlle. Vandamme, Letellier, Messrs. C. Lecuyer, Mons. L. Benedick, Mons. Gerard, Mons. Grether are announced to give an entertainment.

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